

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND  
WILDLIFE  
IN SUPPORT OF  
L.D. 399**

**“AN ACT TO DESIGNATE A YOUTH BEAR HUNTING DAY”**

Presented by: Representative: WOOD of Sabattus.

Cosponsored by: Senator DAVIS of Piscataquis, PATRICK of Oxford  
Representatives: BLACK of Wilton, BRYANT of Windham,  
LONG of Sherman, MARTIN of Eagle Lake, MARTIN of  
Sinclair, STANLEY of Medway, STETKIS of Canaan.

**DATE OF HEARING: March 5, 2015**

Good afternoon Senator Davis, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Andrea Erskine, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **L.D. 399**

This bill requires the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to establish by rule a youth bear hunting day on the Saturday prior to the opening of bear hunting season and it encourages youth to participate in bear hunting by offering this youth only day on the Saturday prior to the opening day of the bear hunting season. The Department provides similar opportunity to youth for deer, spring wild turkey, and waterfowl. As is consistent with our youth deer and spring wild turkey hunting days, the Department recommends that the accompanying parent, guardian or qualifying adult shall not possess a firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow while accompanying a participating youth hunter. In addition the Department recommends that the youth day be offered prior to the opening of the general bear hunting season only, and not be extended to include the bear trapping or hunting with dogs seasons.

In closing we would like to clarify that the law as written may change the pre-baiting date so that it could begin two days earlier thus, adding additional days for adult hunters to pre-bait. We feel that there is ample time to pre-bait bear for this special youth bear hunt and it would be sensible to leave the pre-bait dates as they are. If this bill passes, the Committee may want to consider the following amendment to the language within Title 12 section 11301 subsection 1E.: A person may not place bait to entice, hunt or trap black bear, unless: The bait is placed not more than 30 days before the opening day of the season and not after October 31st (not to include any youth bear hunting day). We are

keenly aware that if the language isn't clear it could cause a potential issue with the interpretation of the official start date of bear season because we dealt with similar considerations when establishing the youth deer day.

Also, if this bill passes we would offer that this be placed in statute rather than requiring the Commissioner to establish a rule, especially if the Committee would like this youth bear hunting day established for the 2015 hunting season. Putting this proposal through the rule making process will mean additional time, costs and complexities.

I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.